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ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY.

The substance of the Report made verbally at the Anniversary Meeting in 1838, by the Right Hon. Sir A. JOHNSTON, as Chairman of the Committee of Correspondence, and afterwards written out by him, at the request of the Meeting, for publication in the proceedings of the Society. (See page xvi.)

It must be obvious to all who have observed with attention the events which have occurred within the last sixteen months, in five very large divisions of Asia, that important changes are about to take place in the situation, opinions, feelings, and manners, of the people of the different countries in each of those divisions. It has, therefore, been the duty of the Committee of correspondence, during the last year, to collect such information relative to the ancient and present state of those countries, as may be useful in regulating the political and commercial relations between Great Britain and each of them in such a manner as to render the different changes, which are taking place in them, equally beneficial to Asia and to Europe. The countries to which the Committee have directed their attention, are, first, those which are situated to the North and South of a line drawn from the Eastern shores of the Euxine to the mouth of the river Amur; second, those which are situated in Asia Minor; third, those which are situated in the peninsula of Arabia; fourth, those which are situated on the different parts of the coasts of Arabia, Persia, and India, into which slaves have been imported for many ages from the Eastern coast of Africa; fifth, those which are situated along the different Highlands which extend from the Himalaya Mountains North, to Cape Comorin South.

The first division of Asia to which they have directed their inquiries, comprehends the several countries situated between the Euxine and the Caspian, between the Caspian and the Lake Aral, on both sides of the river Oxus, and on both sides of the river Amur. The country situated between the Euxine and the Caspian, extending from north to south, about 400 miles, is bounded on the north by the plains of Cuban Tartary, on the south by the river Phasis and Cyrus, on the west by the Euxine, on the east by the Caspian, and is intersected from west to east by the different branches of the Caucasus, which form a natural bulwark between the countries on the north, and those on the south of that great range of mountains, through which there are two openings, celebrated in history by the names of the Iberian and Caspian passes; the peculiar position of this country has rendered it important at all times, and renders it particularly important at the present time, as well in a commercial as in a political point of view—in a commercial, because of the short distance, by the Euxine sea

of its western ports from Odessa, the mouth of the Danube, Constantinople, and the Mediterranean, and of the still shorter distance by the Caspian sea of its eastern ports from Persia, and all the different provinces on the banks of the river Oxus; in a political, because of the influence which the possession of it must give Russia over the people of Asia Minor, Persia, and of both banks of the Euphrates and Tigris. The importance attached by the ancients to the success of the Argonautic expedition, however enveloped in fable, shows the anxiety which traders had, even in the most remote ages, to trade with this part of Asia; the traffic which, within the last few years, has been carried on between Great Britain and Persia, through Trebizond, and the efforts which are making by British merchants, notwithstanding the many obstacles which they have encountered, to open a regular trade with Circassia, show the advantages which it now offers for trade. The sanguinary wars which were waged between the northern barbarians and the Romans, in early ages, those which occurred between the Persians and the Greek empire, in the seventh and eight centuries, and the contest which is now carrying on between the Russians and Circassians, prove the value which has always been and still is attached to it in a military point of view.

The countries which extend from the eastern shores of the Caspian sea to the Aral lake, and those which lie along the banks of the Oxus, were, formerly, an object of interest to Europe from their being the countries through which passed the trade, which was carried on between Europe on the one side, and central Asia, China, and India on the other; they are, at present, an object of equal interest to Europe from their being the countries to which Russia will, probably, be led to extend her arms, and Great Britain her trade, by the common course of events, and from their also being the countries through which Russia is expected to threaten, if not to attack the influence and the possessions of Great Britain in India. The embassy and military expedition, sent some years ago to the Khan of Khiva, and the naval port, established on the south-eastern shore of the Caspian, by Russia, the travels of Lieut. Burnes through many parts of Central Asia, the political and commercial relations established by Great Britain with Cabul, the countries on the Oxus, and the facilities which are afforded by the improvement in steam navigation to those who wish to navigate the Oxus, must daily increase the intercourse between Great Britain and Russia on the one side, and the inhabitants of both banks of the Oxus and all Central Asia on the other, and must gradually introduce amongst them the arts, science, and knowledge of Europe.

The large tract of country which extends along both banks of the river Amur, from its source, till it empties itself into the sea of Okhotsk, that on the north, belonging to the Russians, that on the south to the Chinese, though little known in ancient times, has been an object of interest to Russia, ever since the reign of Catherine II., in consequence of the Amur being the only great river in the neighbourhood of Siberia, and the other possessions of Russia in the north-eastern part of Asia, which flows into the sea in a south-eastern direction, and consequently the only great river, along which the produce of Russian Asia can be with any certainty conveyed to the sea. This circumstance led Catherine, in 1789, to fix on

Oud, not far from the mouth of the Amur, and a port, about two hundred versts to the south of Oud, as two places of trade, and to form the plan, of sending six ships from the Baltic to Kamchatka, to co-operate with a powerful expedition that was to go down the Amur, and take possession of both its banks to its mouth, of opening by this way a trade with Japan, China, and India, and of having in those seas a naval force sufficient to make her authority respected by the inhabitants of the neighbouring countries. Measures are said to have been recently adopted by the Russian government for carrying this plan into effect; if they succeed, they must produce a great and a favourable change, must facilitate the formation of commercial relations between Russia on the one side and Japan and the northern parts of China on the other; must familiarize the people of Japan and China with European intercourse and with European manufactures, arts, and science, and gradually alter their situation, opinions, feelings, and manners.

From all these circumstances, the Committee conceive that Russia and Great Britain, each nation following up what it conceives to be its own interest, must, either by extending their territories and political influence, by opening markets and outlets for their produce and manufacture, or by diffusing a knowledge of the Christian religion and European arts and sciences, rapidly produce a great and beneficial change in the situation, opinions, feelings, and manners, of the people of all the countries included in the first division of Asia, to which the Committee have directed their attention.

The second division of Asia to which the Committee have directed their inquiries, is Asia Minor: the greatest part of this division is under the government and influence of the Turks, the descendants of a race of people who, in the early period of their history, inhabited the range of mountains called the Altay mountains, which are equidistant from the Euxine and the Chinese seas, the Polar and the Indian Ocean, and which were even then known to be rich in those metals, that are equally useful in peace and war this people occupied that particular portion of the mountains which produced iron in great abundance, and were themselves the principal collectors and forgers of that metal.

It is necessary, in order to form some judgment of the nature of the changes which are likely to occur amongst the inhabitants of this division of Asia, to inquire into the history and character of the Turks, and into the nature of the moral and political changes which are daily occurring amongst them; the Committee have therefore considered the history of the Turks under four heads.

1st. That which relates to their original departure from the Altay mountains, and their subsequent conquest of and settlement in Armenia, to which country they gave the name of Turkomania in the seventh century.

2nd. That which relates to their conquest of Persia, and the extinction of the Caliphate of Bagdad in the eighth century.

3rd. That which relates to the re-union of their power, after it had been for some time divided into small states, under Othman, and the establishment of their empire at Bursa, in Caramania, in the thirteenth century.

4th. That which relates to their conquest of Constantinople about the middle of the fifteenth century, and their becoming a European as well as

an Asiatic power, by acquiring an interest and taking a prominent part in the politics of Europe.

In all the different periods of their history, their courage, their activity, their temperance, and their religious enthusiasm, showed the energy of their character, and enabled them to produce a material change in the internal situation and in the circumstances of the different people over whom they from time to time established their authority.

The Turks, from being masters of Constantinople and the Hellespont, of the sea of Marmora, of the Bosphorus, and of the countries extending along the southern shore of the Black Sea from the entrance of the Bosphorus to Trebizond, of the whole of Asia Minor, and of Mosul, Bagdad, and Bussora, must have a great influence over all the different classes of people in Asia Minor. Any moral and political change in the opinions, feelings, manners, and usages of the Turks, must be followed by a change in the opinions, feelings, manners, and usages of those people. The constant intercourse between the Turks and the English on the one side, and between the Turks and the Russians on the other; the knowledge and observance of the European system of military discipline which the present Sultan Mahmoud has introduced into his army and navy; the improved education which he has given to his military and naval officers; the scientific machinery which he has adopted in his arsenals; the advantage and the power which he derives from the application of steam, both at sea and on land; the use which he makes of printing and lithography; the change which he is preparing in the minds of his people, through the influence of the press; the plan which he has adopted of having resident ambassadors with numerous suites at the courts of England and France; the encouragement which he holds out to the members of these embassies to acquire a knowledge of the nature, object, and effects of the different free institutions which prevail amongst the English and the French, and of the liberal and enlightened opinions upon which their political and commercial systems are founded; the steps which he has taken to abolish monopolies throughout his country; the regulations which he has made for protecting his subjects from the ravages of the plague; the reforms by which he is eradicating the corruption which had got into the different departments of his government; the treaty of commerce which he has concluded with Great Britain; the pains which were taken by his Ambassador, Redschid Pasha*, when he was on his former embassy in England, to become acquainted with every institution which could be useful to his countrymen; the manner in which the Pasha was elected a member of the Mechanics' Institution in London; the circumstance which led the members of the Royal Asiatic Society to propose Sultan Mahmoud to be an honorary member of their society, all prove the enlightened principles by which he regulates his conduct,—the change

* Sir Alexander Johnston stated to the Society, that in the frequent communications which he had with Redschid Pasha, while he was in England, respecting the history of the Turks, his Excellency had, with the most enlightened views, promised to procure for the Society every description of information which they may require; and to advise the Sultan to send the Society copies of the different works upon the subject, in the libraries of Constantinople, Adrianople, and Bursa.

which has already taken place in the opinions, feelings, manners, and usages of the Turks, and that which may soon be expected to take place in the opinions, feelings, manners, and usages of all the people of Asia who are under the authority or within the influence of the Turkish government.

The third division of Asia to which the Committee have directed their inquiries, is Arabia, a country which extends north and south, from Belis on the Euphrates, to the Straits of Babel-Mandeb, a distance of 1500 miles. The breadth of this country, taking it from Mocha, on the Arabian, to Muscat on the Persian Gulf, may be estimated at 1000 miles. The interior is described as high land, a space between the high land and the Arabian and Persian Gulfs, and Indian Ocean, as comparatively flat. Arabia is generally divided into six great provinces:—those of Bassein and Oman, on the Persian Gulf, those of Hadramant and Yemen on the Indian Sea, that of Hejaz on the Arabian Gulf, and that of Nejd, which contains all the high land, in the interior. The extent in geographical miles is considered to be about four times that of either France or Germany; the population is often estimated at between eight and nine millions of people. By the history of this people from the time of Abraham to the present period, it appears that their general habits, when not excited by any particular religious, moral, or political motive, have always been the same as those exhibited in the present day by the Bedouin Arabs. These habits, however, seem always to have been liable to be rapidly changed by different events. The Arabs, under Mahomed, excited by a desire of being admitted into his paradise, and by a conviction that their lives depended upon fate, became great warriors, and extended their conquests in a little more than sixty years, from the confines of China, east, to Cordova and Seville, west; and from Toulouse, north, to Abyssinia, south. When their power of conquest was checked, the same people who had been the greatest of conquerors, became the most distinguished and zealous patrons of every branch of literature and science, under the Kaliphs of Bagdad, in Asia; under those of Fez and Morocco, in Africa; and under those of Cordova and Seville, in Spain. After their love of science and literature was extinct, they distinguished themselves as enterprising navigators and traders in the Indian seas; and still continue to carry on a very considerable portion of trade in those seas. The Committee, considering the influence which the Turks must have upon those who inhabit the north part of Arabia, that which the Pacha of Egypt must have upon those who inhabit the eastern shores of the Arabian Gulf and the whole southern coast of Arabia, and that which the constant communication between Europe and India, through the Arabian and Persian Gulfs, must have upon the people in the neighbourhood of those seas, feel themselves authorized to conclude that a great change must soon take place in the opinions, manners, and feelings of all the people of Arabia*.

* Sir Alexander has stated to the Society, that the result, when published, of the very able and scientific survey which has been made by Commodore HAINES and his officers, will afford the public very late and very interesting information relative to the different places on the southern coast of Arabia.

'The fourth division of Asia to which the Committee have directed their inquiries, is that which contains those countries in Arabia, Persia, India, and the Eastern Isles, the natives of which have been from time immemorial in the habit of purchasing slaves from the eastern coast of Africa. The friends of the abolition of slavery having attained the object which they had in view in the West Indies, and having succeeded in getting slavery abolished in that part of the world, seem determined to direct their attention to getting slavery and the slave trade abolished in the eastern part of the world. As there is every reason to believe that they will succeed in accomplishing that object in the east which they have already accomplished in the west; and that the people of Arabia, Persia, India, and the Eastern Islands, will no longer be able to get slaves from the eastern coast of Africa; it is probable that slavery will, ere long, be abolished in those parts of Asia, and that a change must take place, in consequence of this event, in the manners, usages, and feelings of themselves, and of their descendants'

As many persons have, in consequence of the discussions which have recently taken place in both Houses of Parliament, relative to the state of slavery in India, and of the slave-trade in the Indian seas, expressed a wish to know what has hitherto been done in India upon those questions, the following note is added.

From 1802 to 1809 the attention, as well of the people who inhabit the western coast of India, and southern coast of Arabia, as of those who inhabit the coasts of the Arabian and Persian Gulfs, and the eastern coast of Africa, was frequently called to the subject of slavery and to that of the slave-trade, by various measures which Sir Alexander Johnston carried into effect during that period on the island of Ceylon.

In 1809, Sir Alexander having been sent to England by the Government of that island, for the express purpose of proposing and explaining to His Majesty's Ministers a variety of different measures which he thought necessary to be adopted for the improvement of the island, and of the situation of the natives, proposed to them, amongst other, the necessary measures for attaining the following objects:—

1st. For putting an end to the slave-trade in the Indian seas.

2nd. For putting an end to the state of domestic slavery on the island of Ceylon.

3rd. For putting an end to the state of slavery which prevailed amongst all the people who belong to the three castes, called the Corin, the Nellua, and Palla castes, on that island.

4th. For putting an end to the right of forced labour, which, as well the Government of the island as certain privileged persons, claimed by ancient usage from very numerous classes of inhabitants on the island.

5th. For inducing the Imam of Muscat to make over the island of Zanzibar on the east coast of Africa to the British Government; and to co-operate with them in preventing the exportation of slaves from that coast to the Mauritius and different parts of Asia.

His Majesty's Ministers having fully approved of these measures, appointed Sir Alexander Chief Justice and President of His Majesty's Council on the island of Ceylon, and invested him with such powers as were requisite for enabling him to carry them into effect. In 1811, on his return to Ceylon, he took out with him a commission for trying and punishing all such persons as might be guilty of the

The fifth division of Asia to which the Committee have directed their inquiries, is that which contains the people who inhabit the high lands in the different ranges of mountains which run from the Himalaya mountains, north, to Cape Comorin, south; who, from being of a more robust make, and less pertinacious about caste, are supposed to be better adapted

to the offence of trading in slaves, contrary to the act, which had been recently passed declaring that offence to be felony, and on his arrival there, he immediately caused the commission and that act to be proclaimed and published throughout Asia and the Indian Seas. In the year 1813 (see 9th Report of the African Institution,) some men of importance and influence in Africa, Arabia, India, and the Eastern Islands, having been guilty of trading in slaves on Ceylon, were tried, convicted, and punished, at Columbo, under the above act; a circumstance which excited great interest in the several countries to which the prisoners respectively belonged.

On the 12th of August, 1816, Sir Alexander having previously brought out with him from England a charter under the great seal, granting to the native inhabitants of Ceylon the right of sitting upon juries, and being tried by juries of their own countrymen for any offences with which they might be charged, and also many other rights and privileges of British subjects, all the proprietors of domestic slaves on the island, 763 in number, came to a resolution, out of gratitude to the British Government, for having granted to them these privileges, declaring free all children born of their slaves after the 12th of August, 1816, and thereby put an end to the state of domestic slavery, which had prevailed on Ceylon for 300 years (see 11th Report of the African Institution).

In 1817, measures were taken by the Ceylon Government for carrying into effect a plan proposed by Sir Alexander Johnston to His Majesty's Ministers some years before, for gradually emancipating all the people of the Cova, Nallun, and Palla castes, from the particular description of slavery to which they were subject, and in 1834, an order was passed by His Majesty in council, in England, for carrying into effect a plan which had also some years before been proposed by Sir Alexander to His Majesty's Ministers for abolishing the right of the Government on Ceylon, and certain privileged individuals, to exact forced labour from numerous classes of the inhabitants of the island.

Shortly after the trial which has been mentioned as having taken place in 1813, Sir Alexander having had frequent communications with various subjects of the Imám of Muscat, for the purpose of inducing the Imám to co-operate with the British Government in preventing the exportation of slaves from the eastern coast of Africa; and having imparted his views upon the subject of the island of Zanzibar to the Marquess of Hastings, then Governor-General of India, his lordship, some time afterwards, succeeded in getting the Imám of Muscat to offer to surrender the island of Zanzibar to the British Government, upon certain conditions, of which offer his lordship informed Sir Alexander, who, however, on stating the circumstance to the African Institution, found that some obstacles had occurred to prevent the British Government from accepting this offer. Sir Alexander, about three years ago, availing himself of the friendly relations which subsisted between Captain Cogan and the Imám, who is now an honorary member of this Society, wrote a letter through Captain Cogan, to the Imám, and a short time afterwards received an answer from the Imám, declaring that he was anxious to co-operate in every way in his power with the British Government in preventing the exportation of slaves from the eastern coast of Africa.

than the other people of India, to labour for hire in the West Indies, at the Cape of Good Hope, and in Australia. The Committee, judging from the want of labourers, which is now experienced by the proprietors in the West Indies, in the settlements at the Cape of Good Hope, and in Australia, conceive that those proprietors will naturally endeavour to induce the inhabitants of the high lands of India to emigrate from their own country to those different countries in which their labour is required; and should they succeed, which is not improbable, in doing so, it is obvious that a very great change must take place in the feelings, manners, and opinions, not only of those who emigrate from India, but also of those who live in their neighbourhood*.

Considering the importance which must be attached at the present moment by Great Britain, to every description of information relative to British India, the Committee feel it to be their duty to seize the opportunity of expressing their hope that the British Government of India will exert their power, patronage, and influence, both with the natives of the country and with their civil and military servants, in encouraging them to collect, arrange, and publish detailed observations relative as well to the agriculture, manufactures, productions, botany, and natural history of British India, as to the manners, laws, customs, usages, history, and religion, of all the different classes of people who inhabit that vast empire; and thereby emulate the bright examples which have been set them in ancient and modern times, by distinguished sovereigns and governments who have at different times presided over the destinies of all those nations, which can in any way be compared, either for extent of dominion, or for numbers and variety of people and productions, with that extraordinary empire which is now possessed in India by Great Britain. Alexander the Great afforded Aristotle the most ample means for making the collection of facts in natural history, and in every branch of science and literature, from which he prepared those numerous works that still continue, after the lapse of 2000 years, to exercise their influence upon the present age. The republic of Rome assisted Pliny with all their power in obtaining materials for his work on Natural History. The Kaliphs of Bagdad, in Asia, those of Fez and Morocco, in Africa, and those of Seville and Cordova, in Europe, patronized the ablest and most learned men in their dominions, in rescuing from oblivion the science and literature of the Greeks and Romans, and in adding by their own inquiries, studies, and observations, to the knowledge of previous ages in arithmetic, geometry, mechanics, astronomy, medicine, and every department of natural history. The kings of Spain, as soon as they had conquered Mexico and Peru, employed several of their officers in preserving those materials which have enabled many distinguished

* Sir Alexander Johnston called the attention of the Society to the very curious and interesting papers upon the history and manners of the different people of this description, in different parts of India, by Captain A. Mackintosh, of the Madras Military Service; particularly to his valuable account of the Mahader Collicies, and of the tribe of Ramoosies; and expressed his hope that Captain Mackintosh will continue his very useful inquiries into this subject.

writers of the present day to illustrate the history of those interesting nations. The late Empress of Russia, Catherine II., devoted large sums of money, and employed all her influence in assisting Pallas to collect local information in every part of her Asiatic provinces, and in writing a detailed account of whatever was remarkable in those provinces; and the Republic of France, even in the midst of foreign wars and internal confusion, when they sent Buonaparte to make the conquest of Egypt, sent along with him a commission composed of some of the ablest men in France, in every branch of science and literature, to procure on the spot, a thorough knowledge of the country and of the people, and have, thereby, enabled the French nation to lay before Europe such a history of Egypt and the Egyptians as reflects the highest honour upon the men who composed the commission, and upon the nation which enabled them to prosecute their inquiries.

No nation in the world ever possessed so extensive a field and such efficient means as Great Britain now possesses for collecting every description of valuable information relative to India. She has territories extending from the Himalaya mountains, north, to Point de Galle, south, through upwards of thirty degrees of latitude; and from the Gulf of Cambay, west, to the frontiers of China, east, through upwards of forty degrees of longitude. Some of them not more than a few inches, others not less than 26,000 feet above the level of the sea, exhibiting the effects of every variety of climate, having in them almost every modification of mineral, vegetable, and animal production; containing in different parts of their population, human beings influenced by every variety of religious opinion, and by every description of laws, manners, and usages; intersected by or lying contiguous to some of the largest rivers in Asia,—the Brahmaputra, Ganges, Indus, Nerbudda, Tapti, Kistnah, Coleroon, and Cavery; and having a sea-coast of nearly 5000 miles in extent, for the most part open to the Indian Ocean. She has a standing army of upwards of 250,000 men, commanded by well-educated and enterprising men, having under their control and direction a body of engineers and medical officers, who have had the most scientific education which can be given to men in their respective professions, and which peculiarly fits them for every description of scientific research. She has establishments upon the most extensive scale for making surveys of the country; she has numbers of draughtsmen, printing-presses, and lithographic transferring machines, for the purposes of recording and illustrating all the information which may be collected; she has a post, which travels night and day, at the rate of four miles an hour, from the banks of the Sutledge, north, to Dewander Head, or Ceylon, south; and from Surat, west, to Sylhet, east, and which can convey information from Calcutta, the capital of British India, to every part of her dominions in the East, within sixteen or seventeen days. An annual revenue of upwards of twenty millions sterling, and a local government, unchecked in its scientific or literary projects by any local control. With these advantages, the people of India, on the one hand, may be enabled to communicate to the people of England a thorough knowledge of the productions of their country, and of the nature of their wants; while the people of England, on the other, may be enabled to communicate to the people of India a knowledge of the latest improvements

in the arts and sciences of Europe ; and by raising their moral and political situation in their own country, enable them to enjoy and exercise, with honour to themselves and with advantage to their country, all the rights and privileges of freemen and of British subjects. Under these circumstances, the people of India, the people of Great Britain, and the people of Europe, have each a right to expect from the British government in India that that they will enable them respectively to avail themselves of the opportunity which is afforded them by the position in which India now stands with respect to Great Britain, of becoming thoroughly acquainted with every fact which may render this position a benefit, as well to India, and Great Britain in particular, as to Europe in general*.

* Sir Alexander Johnston stated to the Society, that Lord Auckland, ever since he has been Governor-General of British India, has taken the most efficient measures for attaining the literary and scientific objects which the Society have in view ; that he has already sent to England some very useful and interesting communications relative to different parts of the country ; and that he has made arrangements for collecting such information as may be wanted relative to all those countries through which the British armies are about to march on their way to Candahar, Ghazni, and Caubul.
